

Abstract ID : 218

Title : SOUTHERN RIGHT WHALE, *Eubalaena australis*, AERIAL SURVEY IN THE URUGUAYAN ATLANTIC COAST

Category : Ecology

Student : B.A./B.S.

Preferred Format : Poster Presentation

Abstract : The southern right whale, *Eubalaena australis*, is a migratory cetacean. During the winter it is found in middle and low latitudes where it breeds and calves, staying in those areas until the end of spring. This species has a general pattern of callosities that is individually variable, which is used for photoidentification studies. Uruguay (35°S) is situated between two important reproductive sites of this species in the Southwestern Atlantic: Santa Catarina (Brazil, 27°S) and Península Valdés (Argentina, 42°S).

During the years 2001 and 2002 aerial surveys were done along the uruguayan atlantic coast for quantifying the presence of the species in the area, obtaining data about space and temporal distribution, and identifying individuals.

Monthly aerial surveys were done from july to november, in which 250 km of coastline were flown, from Bahía de Maldonado (Maldonado) to Cerro Verde (Rocha).

The months in which more sightings were done during a survey were october (n=25) in the year 2001 and august (n=17) in the year 2002.

The sectors of the coast in which more sightings were done during 2001 were Bahía de Maldonado (Maldonado) and the zone between La Paloma and Punta del Diablo (Rocha), and in 2002 were Bahía de Maldonado, José Ignacio (Maldonado) and La Paloma (Rocha). In both years 30 individuals were photoidentified, none of them have been re-identified yet.

It is intended to make the first photoidentification catalogue for Uruguay and then compare it with the ones available in the region (Argentina & Brazil). While integrating data generated in the region, a contribution for obtaining more information about the population dynamics of this species in the Southwestern Atlantic will be made.